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U.S. Aides Face 143 Suits on Spying

WASHINGTON, May 21 (AP)—Improper Government spying and harassment are the basis for more than \$1 billion in damage claims from individuals who have filed 143 civil suits asserting that their rights were violated, the General Accounting Office reports.

The office, an investigative arm of Congress, conducted the study for the House Government Operations Committee's Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights.

The report provides the most complete list so far of lawsuits growing out of the Watergate era and disclosures of improper and sometimes illegal spying and harassment by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Some of the cases, such as the Socialist Workers Party's \$40 million suit against the bureau and other Government agencies, have been widely publicized but others are less well known.

Role of Justice Dept.

The Justice Department represents present and former Government officials sued for actions they took in the course of their jobs. But when those actions are the subject of a Federal criminal investigation, the department pays a private lawyer to represent the official in the civil case. If the official is charged with a crime in that case, the department will not represent him or pay for his own lawyer in the civil suit.

The G.A.O. report said that, as of Sept. 21, 1976, the department had paid \$440,000, at a rate up to \$75 an hour, to private lawyers in cases arising from the harassment and spying campaigns. This includes fees to two law firms representing four bureau agents sued by the Socialist Workers.

The Government is paying private lawyers for the following other officials:

John A. McCone, Richard Helms, James R. Schlesinger and William E. Colby, all former Directors of Central In-

telligence, and several other former agency officials named defendants in a suit brought by Grove Press Inc. The case involves the agency's Operation CIFAOS to gather information on political dissenters.

The former intelligence directors, former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former postal officials in a class-action suit filed in California by a citizen accusing the Central Intelligence Agency of opening his mail. Several military officers named defendants in a \$1.6 million suit brought by the Berlin Democratic Club, alleging that the Army illegally spied on the club in West Germany.

Former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, defendant in a suit filed by one of his former aides, Morton Halperin, whose home telephone was tapped when Mr. Kissinger and President Nixon were trying to find who was giving information to the news media. The court ruled last December that former Attorney General Mitchell, Mr. Nixon and H.R. Haldeman, former chief of staff for Mr. Nixon, must pay damages, but found that Mr. Kissinger and other defendants were not liable.

In addition, the department has arranged for private attorneys to defend Mr. Mitchell in a suit brought by Jane Fonda, the actress. But the G.A.O. report said that the Government had not had to pay any legal fees in the case as of February.